

Drought
response

ESA
recipients

New badging
stations

PSSM
process

• CLOSED • **Circuit**

WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION

AUGUST 2021



**Exceptional
circumstances**



CLOSED Circuit

VOL. 43 NO. 8, August 2021

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On the cover

*The elevation of Lake Mead in Arizona and Nevada is an indication of the severity of drought in the West. Read the full story on Page 1. (Photo by **Alex Stephens.**)*





Drought conditions may complicate hydropower

Photos by Alex Stephens

W

ith the onset of summer, many states in WAPA's footprint are facing the very real threat of drought so severe that it may complicate hydropower delivery. The circumstances behind this situation are beyond the ability of any one person or organization to control, but WAPA is at least able to prepare in advance.

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This photo from 2015 shows Lake Mead's elevation at 1,075 feet above sea level. Attention is once again on the lake during a very dry 2021.



This 2018 view from the crest of Hoover Dam shows Lake Mead at an elevation of about 1,088 feet above sea level. This year, the Bureau of Reclamation may declare a shortage for the first time in the lake's history.

As of early June, the U.S. Drought Monitor classified 60% of the western U.S. as being under severe, extreme or exceptional drought. This comes after 2020 brought one of the driest and hottest summers in recorded history, with multiple historic heatwaves and an exceptionally devastating fire season.

The situation is compounded by the fact that this past winter was less wet than usual, with reduced snowpack and only around 25% to 50% of the normal amount of rain falling in many areas throughout the West.

The cycle is unfortunate, as dry summers can make the following seasons more difficult. Dry conditions come with warmer weather, allowing moisture to evaporate more easily and quickly from vegetation and soil. This in turn leads to drier conditions, which themselves provide abundant fuel for potential wildfires.

The effects are already being felt across WAPA's service area.

"This isn't only a Desert Southwest or Colorado River Storage Project issue," said Acting Senior Vice President and DSW Regional Manager **Jack Murray**. "Sierra Nevada is also struggling with drought. Anywhere

in our footprint experiencing drought faces the same challenges."

For Murray, these continuing drought impacts are not recent revelations. He has been following drought conditions closely and has been studying the trends. He has also been aware of the media attention on the water levels of Lake Mead, and the fact that the Bureau of Reclamation will likely – if conditions do not significantly change – declare a shortage on the Colorado River for the first time in the lake's history.

Depending upon the severity and length of the drought, this can result in a number of potential impacts. Everything from water users facing service interruptions to increased danger of wildfires, which in turn can endanger WAPA's transmission system.

"Poor hydrology impacts WAPA's customers and the power we market to them," Murray summarized.

Glen Canyon in the crosshairs

Senior Vice President and Acting Rocky Mountain Regional Manager **Tim Vigil** is keeping a close eye on –

among other things – Lake Powell in Arizona and Utah.

The subject of much press attention, Lake Powell serves as a notable indication of the severity of the drought. As of July 1, Lake Powell has only received 30% of its normal amount of inflow for the water year. The lake is projected to be at 27% of capacity by September.

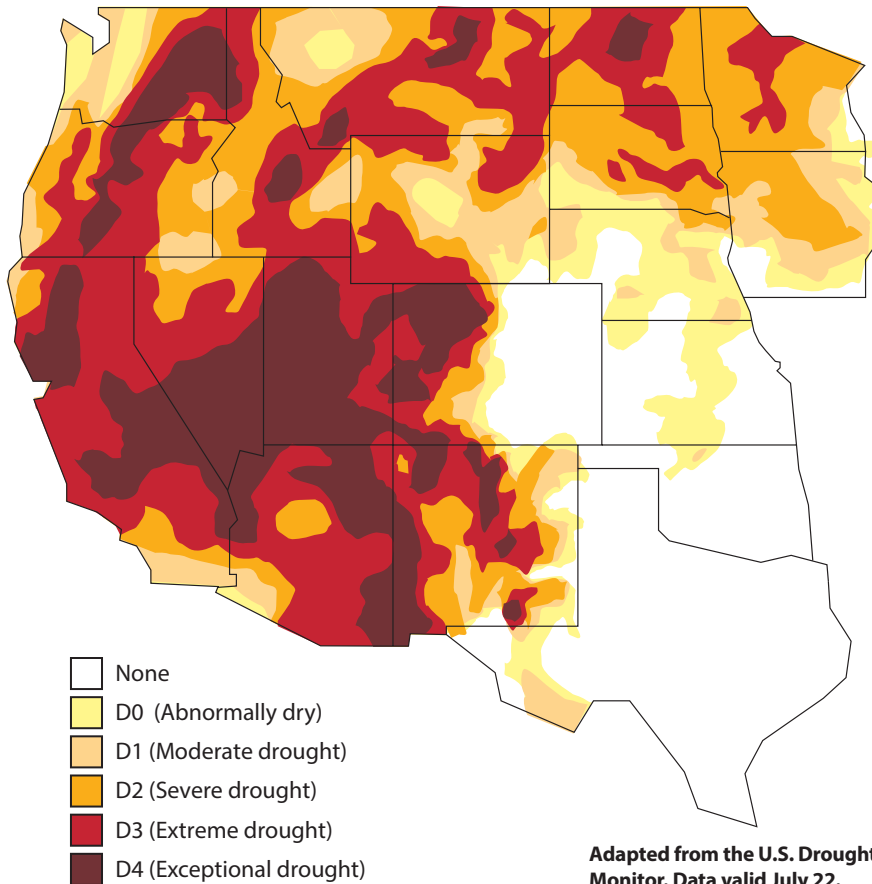
"That would be the lowest level since 1965," Vigil said. "And, to put that in perspective, that was when Lake Powell was being filled. The capacity at that time was increasing. This time, if we hit 27%, it will be because things are moving in the opposite direction."

Vigil went on to explain that a 24-month study performed in May showed that the most-probable forecast saw Lake Powell dropping to an elevation of 3,525 feet – 35 feet above the minimum power pool of 3,490 – in February 2022.

That elevation is significant, and it prompts a number of additional actions.

"It involves changing operations at Glen Canyon," said Vigil. "It involves physically moving water from Blue

Drought in the West



Adapted from the U.S. Drought Monitor. Data valid July 22.



The Boulder Canyon Project markets hydropower from the Hoover Dam, which is dependent upon the elevation of Lake Mead.

Mesa, Flaming Gorge and Navajo into Lake Powell. It is an emergency action by Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland. The Upper Colorado River Commission and Upper Basin states are preparing for the worst-case scenario.”

On July 16, Reclamation announced that it was releasing an additional 181,000 acre-feet of water from dams higher up on the Colorado River and its tributaries due to the imminent need to protect Lake Powell elevations from dropping below 3,525 feet.

Glen Canyon Dam provides around 75% of firm electric service for CRSP customers.

“Right now, purchase power for firming is overwhelming the CRSP revolving fund, known as the Basin Fund,” explained Vigil. “At this rate, it will reach an unsustainable level in October, and we will need to cut allocation or impose surcharge on customers for purchase power.”

He went on to explain that, if the situation is not addressed, there could be an increase of as much as \$10 per megawatt-hour if no changes are made, which would represent a rate increase of nearly 40%.

In order to mitigate the impacts of drought and to minimize large rate increases, CRSP MC is currently in a public process to revise its power rates to remove purchase power expenses. The proposed rate will give customers additional flexibility; each customer will receive a proportion of the actual hydropower generated and can also request to receive additional firming energy on a monthly pass-through-cost basis.

This rate is proposed to be effective Dec. 1 for a two-year period, allowing for the improvement of water conditions and the development of additional strategies.

Driest in decades

In SN, the Central Valley Project is experiencing its driest water year since 1977.

“This means that many water contractors to the CVP will get little or no water from the project this year,” said Supervisory Public Utilities Specialist **Robert Delizo**. “Due to the drought conditions, Reclamation decided to implement a warm water bypass in



Lake Powell in Arizona and Utah had only received 30% of its normal amount of inflow by July 1.

Shasta in April and May to preserve cold water until later in the year, when it is needed most for the spawning of the fish. This bypass had an estimated financial impact to CVP power customers of up to \$7 million for replacement purchase power.”

Shasta Reservoir, Folsom Reservoir and New Melones Reservoir are the primary reservoirs affecting CVP generation. In April, it became clear that expected reservoir inflow from snowmelt failed to occur, leaving Shasta and Folsom reservoirs with lower than average capacity: 44% at Shasta and Folsom at 37%. Both are expected to drop further, potentially affecting municipal customers.

New Melones reservoir fares better at 57% capacity, thanks to storage accumulated during prior wet years.

“Low water levels in reservoirs during drought conditions reduce the energy that can be generated by hydroelectric dams,” Delizo explained. “With reduced generation output from the CVP, we expect reduced base resource will be available to power

customers. This results in several financial impacts to customers.”

Purchasing power at a higher cost to replace what would otherwise be available from CVP is one obvious impact. Customers will receive fewer hydropower carbon credits, due to reduced CVP generation. The decrease in generation also means that less revenue can be used to reduce the Power Revenue Requirement.

SN and Reclamation will continue to work together to schedule generation.

“In view of the drought, Reclamation and the California Department of Water Resources prepared a Drought Contingency Plan to coordinate water operations,” said Delizo.

To keep power customers informed, WAPA and Reclamation held a joint-agency meeting with power customers in May to discuss conditions. WAPA and Reclamation are also meeting with customers at least quarterly to discuss water and power operations updates, Base Resource forecasts and power marketing updates.

Two projects to juggle

Murray is similarly keeping an eye on developments, specifically in terms of the two projects from which DSW markets hydropower: Boulder Canyon and Parker-Davis.

The Boulder Canyon Project markets hydropower from the Hoover Dam, with all generated output sold to customers on a pro-rata basis to align with available capacity, which itself is dependent upon the elevation of Lake Mead.

At customers’ request, WAPA is able to purchase energy to make up for any shortfalls in the output of Hoover Dam, with the cost of the purchase being passed along to customers. As Murray says, however, this is not an option that customers have historically exercised.

With severe drought, however, this could end up being necessary. “Every megawatt not generated by the dam is a megawatt that must be purchased from another source to meet customer needs, usually at a higher cost,” he explained.

The Parker-Davis Project, on the other hand, is a firm product.

“That means that we are contracted to provide a specific amount of power,” said Murray. “When there are shortfalls, WAPA purchases additional power.”

He went on to explain that Parker-Davis Project generation is dependent upon water orders from users downstream of the Hoover, Parker and Davis dams, many of whom use the water for agricultural purposes. The effect could snowball.

“Reduced deliveries due to a shortage declaration could further decrease generation, requiring even more purchased power expenses for customers,” he said.

In short, reduced generation causes an increase in purchased power costs as well as increases in power rates.

“Continued drought increases the cost of power on the market,” Murray emphasized. “Customers are pinched on all sides with increased costs.”

WAPA is engaging in conversations with customers and Reclamation to discuss options for mitigating potential financial impacts. □

WAPA attorney joins EBA Board of Directors

In late May, the Energy Bar Association announced the new president of its Board of Directors – as well as its new members, officers and directors – at its Virtual Annual Meeting and Conference. One of those new board members is Transmission Infrastructure Program Attorney **Erin Green**.



Green joins other board members from the Edison Electric Institute, Texas Retail Energy, George Washington University Law School and more. Mosby G. Perrow IV was announced as president of the board for 2021-2022. He replaces outgoing president Jane Rueger.

The EBA describes itself as “an international, non-profit association of attorneys, energy professionals, and students active in all areas of energy law. The EBA advances the professional excellence of those engaged in energy law, regulation, and policy through professional education, exploring diverse viewpoints and building connections.”

Green has been involved with the EBA about as long as it has had a Rocky Mountain chapter. For the past year, she has even served as the RM chapter’s president.

“I attended conferences early in my legal career,” she said. “About seven years ago there was interest from the western chapter of the EBA to branch off and create a chapter for the Rocky Mountain states.”

Around that time, Senior Vice President and General Counsel **John Bremer** and Vice President and Assistant General Counsel **Ron Klinefelter** were invited to meet with some of the members involved with the effort.

“They invited me to come along,” she said. “That was my first big entry into what would become the RM chapter.”

From there she participated in a young lawyers’ committee and various networking events, which led to her being invited to join the chapter. She eventually earned the role of secretary, and then vice president and finally president.

“My job as president is to hold monthly meetings among the board, which are all energy attorneys in Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming,” she said. “We hold an annual conference each year, which is set up like an educational conference, where lawyers get continuing legal education credits.”

Green says she feels honored and proud for the opportunity to serve on the EBA’s Board of Directors.

“I am grateful for the opportunity to work with such a prestigious group of people,” she said. “I appreciate the opportunity to be able to share my perspectives, coming from a more unique area in the energy industry, and the opportunity to learn from the other board members.”

In her new capacity, Green will serve as the liaison to the EBA Young Lawyers Committee. The committee is close to her heart, as she was a member of that group as well. She and other members have participated in panel discussions and presented at law schools. She has even helped other members who were interested in energy learn about career paths and shared her experience as a lawyer within WAPA.

“I am excited to work with the EBA’s Young Lawyers Committee to create networking and growth opportunities for the future lawyers of our industry,” she said.

“These young lawyers and law students are the people who will be shaping the future of our industry.”

She is also looking forward to expanding her own network.

“I am very excited to work with other energy professionals across the country on special programming,” said Green. “I am also excited to work with the EBA board members from the American Public Power Association and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.”

Of course, Green also sees this as an important opportunity for growth that will benefit WAPA as a whole.

“There is another board member who works for a D.C. law firm that is heavily involved in working with our customers,” she said. “I’m excited to learn directly from the energy lawyers and professionals who provide important legal and representation support for so many of WAPA’s customers.” □

Exceptional employees honored



Every year, WAPA's administrator honors standout employees with Exceptional Service Awards. The ESAs recognize those who excel in technical competency, enthusiasm, innovation and commitment to bettering themselves and WAPA.

"The ESA is the highest award the administrator can give," said Interim Administrator and CEO **Tracey LeBeau** in her announcement. "Since 1990, we have recognized about 240 exceptional employees and their accomplishments. The ESA recipients represent the best and brightest of WAPA – those employees who go above and beyond to serve our customers and our mission and who embody our core values every day."

All ESA nominations are submitted by employees and peers. Here are the winners for 2021.

HEADQUARTERS

CLAIRE DOUTHIT Attorney-Advisor

For nearly 20 years, Claire Douthit has provided legal, marketing and operational support to WAPA, specifically the Rocky Mountain region and the Colorado River Storage Project Management Center. As the organization has moved toward its strategic goals and targets, she has provided sound legal advice, support and organizational skills to analyze, assess and tackle key industry initiatives.

Douthit is a trusted member of RM's strategic team. She was instrumental to the success of the retirement of the Rocky Mountain Reserve Sharing Group and the subsequent Northwest Power Pool Reserve Sharing Group migration and the NWPP Balancing Authority agreement for members within the Western Area Colorado Missouri BA.

Due to the nature of a WAPA-controlled BA, complex legal considerations and documentation were necessary. Douthit's expertise was critical to the success of the projects as well as the continued reliability of WAPA's transmission system and the Western Interconnection as a whole. She has exemplified WAPA's commitment to its customers and the industry by providing the sound legal support to facilitate a more cost-effective and reliable grid.



Douthit was also instrumental to this year's successful implementation of the Southwest Power Pool Western Energy Imbalance Service market. Because of her unique position covering the WACM BA, RM projects and the Colorado River Storage Project, she was challenged to both research the law and recommend the correct legal courses of action. She also ensured the protection and critical policies for the RM projects and CRSP, as well as for their customers.

This included the creation and implementation of the Joint Dispatch Agreement, the WEIS Tariff, the WEIS Market Protocols, additions to WAPA's Delegation Authority and the monumental task of creating a new agreement for WACM BA customers to facilitate WEIS and other important BA services.

UPPER GREAT PLAINS

LORI FRISK Vice President of Power Marketing for Upper Great Plains

Lori Frisk has provided leadership to the Upper Great Plains Power Marketing teams, and her drive and dedication have been critical to their success. She reorganized workload and made staffing changes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Southwest Power Pool Settlements process. She also



represented UGP's Settlements and Power Billing groups during the Organizational Approach to Markets effort.

As a power marketing manager, Frisk develops programs for the sale and transmission of hydroelectric power to a diverse customer base. She negotiates contracts for power purchases, power sales, facilities, acquisition of transmission services and the settlement of disputes and rates.

Within the past year, Frisk led her staff to successfully market over 3,500 gigawatt-hours of energy generated by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers in the SPP Integrated Marketplace and the Western Interconnection. She also led her team to execute more than 200 power-related contracts with customers, including 23 Native American Tribes.

Frisk led her team to implement the policies and processes necessary as UGP joined the SPP Western Energy Imbalance Service market. She played an integral role in UGP announcing its decision to consider participation in the SPP Regional Transmission Organization. She also led her team in negotiations with customers and cosuppliers in the aftermath of February's polar vortex.

One of her key accomplishments in 2020 was establishing the region's COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center and an Incident Command System. As incident commander, she led the regional efforts in the development and application of COVID-19 policies and procedures, coordination of resources and information sharing.

Frisk is the regional sponsor for the Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Committee. She participates on the Inclusion, Innovation and Technology Committee, and serves on the American Federation of Government Employees Contract Negotiation Team, the Full-Time Equivalent Reallocation Process Team, the Energy Storage Team and the Extended Leadership Team.

HEADQUARTERS

DON GERRISH

Supervisory Human Resources Specialist

Don Gerrish has been with WAPA and the Department of Energy for nearly six years, and has provided noteworthy leadership to not only his team, but to the Power Marketing Administration Human Resources Shared Service Center as a whole, supporting the transition of several permanent and temporary HR directors.

Gerrish ensures that WAPA's management and unions continue to have a great working relationship. He assists on the Administratively Determined Pay Committee and has worked with WAPA's leaders and the DOE to find resolutions to ongoing pay issues. He also is a member of the Western Maintenance Managers Committee and assists with yearly pay negotiations. Additionally, he successfully negotiated a contentious pay issue in which the Defense Finance and Accounting Service paid craft employees erroneously.



During his tenure, he has negotiated many memoranda of understanding with unions related to myriad issues, including performance, discipline and Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements. He and his team are consistently praised by supervisors and employees for their professionalism, quick response and customer service.

Over the past several years, Gerrish and his staff have trained employees WAPA-wide on issues such as time and leave, performance, employee relations and labor relations. He has served as the local reasonable accommodation coordinator, helping management and employees negotiate solutions to complex issues. He is also the agency telework coordinator and worked on the team that initiated WAPA's first MaxiFlex program.

More recently, he has worked continuously on a variety of COVID-19-related issues and has provided expert advice to management and employees on a variety of issues to ensure that WAPA's mission is accomplished. Gerrish is always looking out for his team and WAPA, taking every opportunity to appreciate and recognize his staff.

SIERRA NEVADA

DAVID HAHN

Maintenance Management Specialist

David Hahn has contributed significantly to WAPA during his 18 years of service with the Sierra Nevada region, particularly in the areas of North American Electric Reliability Corporation compliance and Reliability Centered Maintenance.

In his role as a subject matter expert for NERC Compliance Standard PRC-005, Protection System Maintenance, Hahn has shown outstanding performance in tracking and documenting the required evidence for audits. Since 2009, there have been no findings in the three-year audits performed by NERC and the Western Electricity Coordinating Council. His performance is consistently above required outage reporting for the Transmission Availability Data System and the North American Transmission Forum.

Hahn is considered the expert for SN's RCM Program. He has represented the region on the WAPA-wide RCM team since the program began more than 15 years ago and was instrumental in developing and implementing SN's equipment studies, job plans and preventive maintenance program. Additionally, Hahn continually researches new technology to improve WAPA's maintenance practices. He has performed significant research on improving the use of corona cameras and equipment monitoring devices to enhance or adjust required maintenance.

Hahn's expertise covers a wide range of areas and he is respected throughout the organization for his knowledge, experience and commitment to excellence.

He is a representative on the Electric Power Research Institute Transmission & Substations Task Force, the North American Transmission Forum Metrics Working Group and





the California Independent System Operator Transmission Maintenance Coordination Committee.

Hahn's actions embody both ethics and integrity, and his commitment to service is beyond compare. He toils behind the scenes to ensure WAPA's success, and his treatment of others is rooted in kindness and respect. He is a good-natured person who elevates those who work with him. Hahn's commitment to excellence and integrity is apparent in everything he has accomplished during his career with WAPA.

DESERT SOUTHWEST

SHEILA KEATING **Power System Dispatcher**

Sheila Keating has served WAPA for 33 years as an electrical engineer. She is recognized across the organization as an expert in many areas, and has played an integral role in establishing and ensuring that the organization's standards for protection, compliance and reliability are met.



Keating is a technical lead and regional expert for System Protection and Compliance and an active member on four WAPA committees. She has successfully established and currently maintains Desert Southwest's protection compliance program; through her leadership, there were no North American Electric Reliability Corporation or Western Electricity Coordinating Council violations in more than 17 years.

For more than a decade, she has been solely responsible for maintaining and updating the ASPEN transmission system models for the DSW region. This requires constant diligence and is vital to the service, planning and reliability of the bulk electric system. She has also demonstrated unparalleled attention to detail in engineering design packages.

Keating is a recognized subject matter expert for protection settings and relay coordination. She provides engineering consultation and recommendations for every utility connected to DSW's transmission system, and she is responsible for constant communication and coordination with all utilities within DSW's service territory.

She provides technical support to field personnel in analyzing fault records, evaluating equipment performance,

investigating misoperations, troubleshooting equipment failures and researching innovative solutions.

Keating is also a member of the Human Performance Analysis Team, and her experience in fault analysis is sought after to explain events to those in the group and provide insight into day-to-day field work. Her expertise has helped the team to gain a better understanding of events that have occurred and then to be better able to make informed suggestions to benefit crews.

COLORADO RIVER STORAGE PROJECT MGMT CENTER

SHANE MESSANO **Supervisory Energy Management and Marketing Specialist**

Shane Messano, a former U.S. Marine, exemplifies the can-do spirit of the Marine Corps and lives the code of *semper fidelis* – always faithful – on a daily basis.



He started his career with WAPA around a decade ago as a public utilities specialist assigned to the Colorado River Storage Project Energy Management and Marketing Office and has steadily progressed through the organization. He now manages the day-ahead and real-time merchant functions as EMMO manager, proving himself as a catalyst for moving CRSP and WAPA forward in an ever-changing industry.

Messano has assisted and led nearly all of the initiatives and changes for the EMMO, working with other functional areas to bring WAPA's needs into focus for the benefit of the organization. His highly motivated attitude has enabled him to become an expert in operations and reliability, as well as participate in several operations-focused committees, ensuring that financial and merchant perspectives are taken into account.

He has a lead role in WAPA's initiative to join Southwest Power Pool's Western Energy Imbalance Service market. From the beginning, Messano has been working tirelessly, participating in every Western Markets Executive Committee meeting and the drafting of the Joint Dispatch Agreement, the WEIS Tariff and WEIS Market Protocols. He chaired the WEIS Market Protocols Task Force and successfully brought all WEIS members together to finalize the protocols on a tight timeline in less than three weeks.

Messano's leadership and work prevented any delay in the implementation of WEIS. He took it upon himself to work with and advise SPP technical staff on the correct course of action for WEIS issues, bridging the gap between the operating environments that are very different in the Eastern Interconnection and the Western Interconnection. He is respected by the SPP staff and the WEIS members, and he continues to bring them together in pursuit of common goals.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

ROBERT SPRINGER Electronics Engineer

Robert Springer is a skilled engineering professional. He is a key expert for WAPA and the Rocky Mountain region and has served proudly for 22 years.

Springer's performance is stellar and consistent, and he significantly outperforms long-term engineering milestones. He has provided his expertise to several supervisory control and data acquisition; bulk electric system; and metering and communications projects. He also played a key engineering role in moving the Colorado River Storage Project metering boundary from Shiprock, New Mexico, to Pinnacle Peak, Arizona.

He is knowledgeable of the key aspects of North American Electric Reliability Corporation compliance and has worked to successfully solve issues with the Reliability Compliance Team during critical compliance assessments, reducing risk and substantiating evidence for Western Electricity Coordinating Council audits.

Additionally, his involvement in outside activities reflects favorably upon WAPA, such as a meter project with the Bureau of Reclamation, during which he applied his engineering skills to upgrade the Reclamation meters within the generation plants in preparation for the Western Energy Imbalance Service market.

He has worked with the Mountain West Transmission Group to coordinate the purchase and configuration of meters for the Colorado River Storage Project. He further worked to successfully test a new WAPA security-event logs solution to sustain NERC compliance. In addition, he worked to successfully install numerous remote terminal units at several of the CRSP plants in order to electronically poll data from the meters and pass it accurately to the automatic generation control.

Springer also led the effort to successfully complete the broad-spectrum implementation of BES cyber assets for Maximo attributes and all 7,650 engineering drawing revision updates.



He originated an authorized baseline change configurations interactive worksheet process, which received recognition from the 2018 WECC auditors. He has always exceeded expectations in his additional duties and assignments and demonstrates outstanding performance of day-to-day engineering tasks.

HEADQUARTERS

RONALD TRITZ Supervisory Information Technology Specialist

Ronald Tritz has been a champion of networking technology at WAPA for almost 30 years. He is an expert in his field, known for looking ahead to find solutions that will work into the future and serve the entirety of WAPA and its customers, rather than only one program or region.

Tritz pioneered a new approach to reading power billing revenue meters by implementing network connectivity between WAPA's meter data collection system and revenue meters in the field. Previously, someone had to drive to the sites, oftentimes hundreds of miles, to download the information. Tritz safely and securely replaced the legacy system using modern technology, resulting in a faster, more reliable system.

He also served as a leader in the development of the Western Information Network, which allowed increased connectivity at substations. WIN was an earlier iteration of what would eventually become WAPA's Secure Enclave Support Center, and Tritz was a leader in that buildout as well, allowing for increased secure, remote access to Operational Technology infrastructure.

Tritz was a leader in the Network Modernization effort, which increased WAPA's bandwidth and capacity. Having been completed within a year of the pandemic, it paved the way for a near-seamless transition to the maximum telework posture. He was a key leader in the effort to migrate 1,200 employees to telework in a two-week period, and to build solutions so that power marketers could get Voice over Internet Protocol and network service from their homes.

Tritz represented WAPA as a key member of the Department of Energy and Electric Power Research Institute Resilient Communications Workgroup, a team that was responsible for determining technical solutions for emergency communication for North American utilities during major black sky events that would disrupt the normal functioning of critical infrastructure. □





Get to know WAPA's CAO

By Teresa Waugh

In 2020, **Jennifer Rodgers** was selected as WAPA's senior vice president and chief administrative officer. In this role, Rodgers is responsible for WAPA's internal administrative operations and managing administrative programs critical to WAPA's mission. She is also the primary liaison with the Power Marketing Administration Human Resources Shared Service Center. *Closed Circuit* sat down with Rodgers recently to learn more about her.

What is your most rewarding experience at WAPA thus far?

I have had so many rewarding experiences at WAPA, it's difficult to choose one. Honestly, the wide array of rewarding experiences is why I work here. From my perspective, WAPA is a place where if you have an idea to make something better, and you are willing to take the initiative to get stakeholder buy-in and do the implementation work, you are usually supported in the effort.

To pick one example, I'll use a recent one: the early days of WAPA's COVID-19 response. To say we were "flying the plane while we built it" seems like an understatement. We had issues coming at us fast and very little precedent or solid information to work from. Our WAPA team came together, with laser focus, to keep staff safe, find solutions and keep the lights on for our customers.

It was exhausting, frustrating and far from perfect, yet we learned so much and ended up with results I think we can all be proud of. A true team success.

What is something most people do not know about you?

I guess I'll say there are two things about me that often surprise people when they find out.

First, I was born and raised in La Crescenta, California, which is a little community in the Los Angeles area. I definitely had valley girl tendencies growing up and worked very hard to remove the word "like" from my vocabulary. I think "like" and "dude" still sneak in there on occasion.

And second, I am very introverted. After a full day of meetings and conversations, I really need quiet time to recover. Pre-COVID, this was my NPR time during my commute. Since COVID has eliminated my commute, I've had to adapt. Just having an hour at the end of my day to quietly get some tasks done or simply zoning in on social media for 15 minutes helps a lot.

What are your communication and leadership styles?

I work every day to use an inclusive leadership and communication style. I truly believe we are more connected in our work here at WAPA than we often realize. I seek to bring people into the fold. I appreciate what I learn from these interactions and I believe it leads to improved decisions and innovative approaches with fewer unintended consequences.

Additionally, from a purely practical perspective, every key decision requires others to support successful implementation. And those involved in the implementation need to understand "the why" behind the decision they are implementing. It is much more

efficient to engage people early than to try to bring them on board after the fact.

What are you reading right now? Do you have a favorite author?

For professional reading, I am currently enrolled in a Dare to Lead workshop, so I am spending a good amount of time reading Brené Brown's book *Dare to Lead* and exploring those concepts deeper.

It is the summer, and my son and I always read Harry Potter together in the summer. We just started *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* and, for added fun, we are reading the British versions this year.

In terms of podcasts, my secret geek out podcast is Planet Money. I feel like my true calling may have been as a social economist.

Would you tell us about your coworkers at home?

My coworkers are my husband, my 10-year old son and my cat, Buddy.

My husband and I used to share an office, which lasted not even a week into the pandemic. Apparently, I am on calls and meetings way too much to share office space.

My son is a fun, energetic, creative kid who enjoys popping in on my Teams calls to give me bunny ears, dance behind me or simply place something in the background to cause people to laugh. And Buddy also likes to stop by in the afternoon for a quick visit; his tail can occasionally be seen swishing across the screen. □

Note: Waugh is WAPA's chief public affairs officer.

Welcome WAPA's new badging stations

By Alexandra Gatsiopoulos

Badges are critical to employees' ability to work from home. They ensure that employees can access their computers and electronic files to telework seamlessly, as though they were in the office. In that regard, it is critical that employees obtain and maintain their badges. WAPA's new badging stations help them to do that.



The COVID-19 pandemic introduced challenges to providing necessary badging services, as several external badging stations across the country shut down and are only serving their internal employees.

With this decrease in badging-station availability, the Office of Security and Emergency Management partnered with regional offices to order additional stations and assist employees. As a result, WAPA has added eight new full badging stations across the regions.

With these additions, local employees and applicants have access to badging stations in WAPA's facilities with increased flexibility. Those not near an internal station may use the USAccess portal to find the nearest shared station. This will require planning and

travel. Employees and hiring officials should keep this in mind when planning badge activities.

There are two types of badging stations. The first type, the full badging station, allows for:

- **Enrollment:** badge photo and fingerprint capture. This function is required for new employees, name changes and expired badges.
- **Activation:** new badge activation needed for logical and physical access.
- **Certificate updates:** badge certificate updates related to logical access.

The second type, the light activation station, allows for all of the same functions aside from enrollment. Employees in need of enrollment services must visit a full badging station.

Check your badge expiration!

Employees should keep two badge expiration dates in mind. The first is the badge certificate expiration, which is three years from the date the badge was activated. The second is the Personal Identity Verification card expiration, which is five years from the date it was activated.

Three months prior to either date of expiration, a series of automatic emails from USAccess, the badging system, will be sent to the employee's wapa.gov email address, notifying them that their badge requires an update. The email will include guidance and instructions on what to do next.

Periodically check your badge and take note of the expiration date instead of solely relying on automatic

reminders. The expiration date is printed on the front of the badge. Failure to addresses these expiration timelines will cause your badge to terminate automatically, rendering it inoperable. If this happens, it may take several weeks to get a replacement badge.

Be sure to check your junk email folder. Occasionally, USAccess email notifications end up there.

Remember, your badge is necessary to accomplish your work at WAPA. Take note of any expiration dates and the nearest badging stations to make sure your work can continue uninterrupted! □

For badging-related questions or issues, or if you are unsure about a notification you have received, email personnel.security@wapa.gov



Note: Gatsiopoulos is a personnel security specialist.

WAPA's badging stations

Location	Type of badging station	Contact for appointment
Headquarters		
Lakewood, Colorado	Full	personnel.security@wapa.gov
Desert Southwest		
Phoenix, Arizona	Full	602.605.2444 or dswguards@wapa.gov
Rocky Mountain		
Loveland, Colorado	Full	970.461.7409
Montrose, Colorado	Light activation	970.240.6201 or hannigan@wapa.gov
Casper, Wyoming	Light activation	307.232.5202 or harrison@wapa.gov
Sierra Nevada		
Elverta, California	Full	614.286.4210
Folsom, California	Full	916.353.4037
Tracy, California	Full	209.597.2027
Upper Great Plains		
Billings, Montana	Full	406.255.2822 or antoni@wapa.gov
Fort Peck, Montana	Full	406.526.8516 or farr@wapa.gov ; 406.526.8534 or mpalm@wapa.gov
Bismarck, North Dakota	Full	701.221.4524 or holzer@wapa.gov
Huron, South Dakota	Full	605.353.2501 or alonas@wapa.gov
Watertown, South Dakota	Full	605.880.4232 or lwelch@wapa.gov



Be part of WAPA's safety progress

By Paul Robbins

Photo by David Katich

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s George Bernard Shaw once said, "Progress is impossible without change." Safety practices must change over time to address modified work activities and new tools at WAPA. As they do, our organization progresses by promoting a safer workplace.

Whether you work in the field or the office, the *Power System Safety Manual* details a broad range of rules aimed at preventing occupational injury and illness, property damage or work interruption.

Process of change

Consistent with WAPA guidance, the PSSM is revised annually

during a four-month process, beginning in August, that is directed by Headquarters Safety and Occupational Health.

Before the revision process begins, SOH forms a review committee that consists of volunteers representing a cross-section of employees from the craft, management, labor relations and Operations

and Maintenance, as well as union representatives. The purpose of the committee is to review and evaluate all suggested changes to the PSSM.

Getting involved

Because SOH cannot monitor every change in work practices throughout WAPA, they rely on employee input to let them know

what is happening throughout the organization.

During the first week of August, SOH releases a WAPA-wide email requesting PSSM revision suggestions from employees using Form 470.2 with a deadline of Aug. 31. In fact, you may have already seen the email that was sent out earlier this month.

The form requests the following information: the type of revision, the section and paragraph to be revised, the existing wording of the affected part, the suggested new wording and justification for the change.

Two weeks later, SOH sends an email to employees reminding them of the Aug. 31 form-submission deadline. After that, SOH collects all suggested changes and begins the revision review process.

Reviewing and revising

After all revision suggestions are submitted and received, SOH combines them into a PDF booklet during the first two weeks of September.

By this time, the PSSM Review Committee has been assembled. Around Sept. 20, the PSSM *Revision Booklet* is sent to all committee members for a monthlong evaluation period. Committee members review the suggested changes and make note of any questions, comments, discrep-

ancies or concerns about the revisions that will be brought to the committee meeting for further discussion.

At the end of October, the PSSM Review Committee meets for two days to review, evaluate, discuss and accept or reject revision suggestions. The meeting is normally held each year at the Electric Power Training Center in Lakewood, Colorado. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, it was held by teleconference in 2020. The teleconference option is always available for those who cannot attend in person, and the entire meeting may be held via teleconference depending on WAPA's pandemic stance in October.

Some revisions are basic and easily decided, while others require intense discussion and evaluation to better understand their impact. That is why a diverse cross-section of employees is needed for the committee, according to SOH Manager **Ed Crowson**, who supervises the revision process.

"Having committee participants with different backgrounds from various functional areas provides diversity of thought and opinion while vetting submitted revision requests," said Crowson. "Insight from employees external to WAPA's safety community is vital to improving a product that impacts everyone within the agency."

After a suggestion is vetted and accepted, it is added to the new PSSM document. If an idea is rejected, then the justification is noted and the revision is retired. After all revisions have been vetted, the committee disbands and the review is complete.

Final production

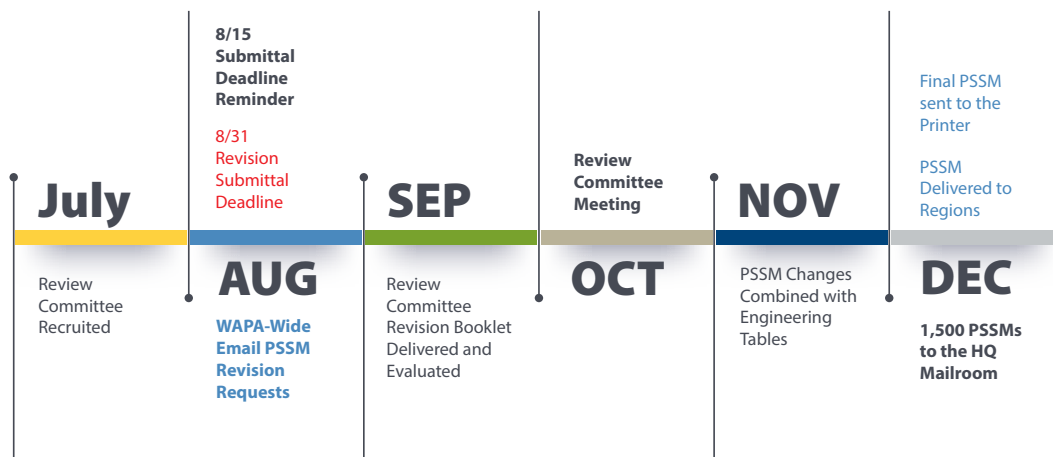
During November, SOH works closely with Electrical Engineer **Gary Zevenbergen** in Asset Management to incorporate updated tables in Appendices H-K, including Ground Cable Requirements and Arc Flash Parameters for all regions.

The PSSM is then finalized and sent to Public Affairs for delivery to the printer by Dec. 1. Around Dec. 20, the printer delivers 1,500 copies of the new PSSM to the HQ Mailroom, which works closely with SOH to coordinate delivery to regional points of contact.

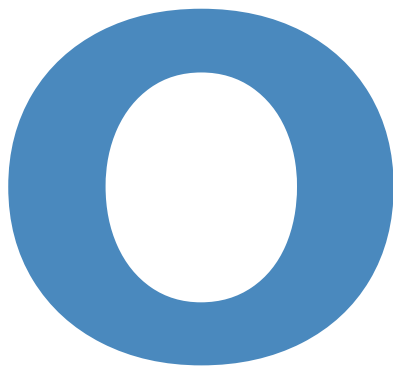
Change makes progress possible, and evolving safety practices help create a safer workplace for all. If you see a need for a change to the PSSM, take part in the process and contribute to WAPA's safety progress. □

Note: Robbins is a technical writer who works under the Cherokee Nation Strategic Programs contract.

2021 PSSM Revision Process Timeline



AEM updates employees on major initiatives



On June 29, employees gathered virtually for WAPA's All-Employee Meeting, streamed across the organization's 15-state footprint to employees at home, in the field and at their worksites.

The event was emceed by Supervisory Information Technology Specialist **Tonya Spencer**. In addition to introducing herself to attendees and summarizing her role at WAPA, she discussed her experience contracting COVID-19 in the fall.

"I'm not sure where I got it," she said. "Afterward, I had several months of lingering issues related to COVID. The least of my concerns was a letter from the county threatening me with a \$5,000 fine if I left my home. And, of course, I received it three weeks after my positive test result."

Spencer emphasized that that was the only comical part of her story; she spent five days in the hospital with psychosis brought on by the virus.

"It was the most humbling experience I've ever had," explained Spencer. "Recovering from my experience led me to volunteer to be your

emcee today, because it makes me feel like I'm back to feeling healthy."

Attendees then heard from Interim Administrator and CEO **Tracey LeBeau**, who spoke about drought conditions, a responsible return to the workplace and the increased public attention on power delivery.

"It appears the days of the electric grid being a mostly overlooked engineering marvel are long over," she said. "As we have seen, especially during this pandemic when electricity shutoffs were banned in many states and during the winter storm outages in Texas, electricity is not a nicety or even a commodity that supports the economy; it's a critical necessity to preserve and protect life."

She also spotlighted several employees who have been recognized with external awards and announced

this year's recipients of the Exceptional Service Awards.

Leadership Development Specialist **Brittanie Paquette** and Program Manager **Troy Steadman** then spoke about the Leadership Development Program, and Equal Employment Opportunity Manager **Charles Montañez** spoke about the Office of Economic Impact & Diversity.

This was followed by Supervisory Public Utilities Specialists **Chrystal Dean** and **Robert Delizo**, who discussed current drought impacts faced within WAPA's service territory.

At the meeting's conclusion, Chief of Staff **Melissa Ardis** facilitated a live Q&A with participants. □

The next AEM is scheduled for Oct. 26 at 9:30 a.m. Mountain time.



WAPA among best places to work in federal government

In July, WAPA was ranked in the top quartile of government agencies as a Best Place to Work in Federal Government for 2020, the second consecutive year.

The Partnership for Public Service publishes the rankings annually, basing them on overall employee engagement in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. For 2020, WAPA ranked 77 out of 411 subcomponent agencies and received an engagement score of 80.2, up from 74.7 in 2019 and well above the governmentwide score of 69.0.

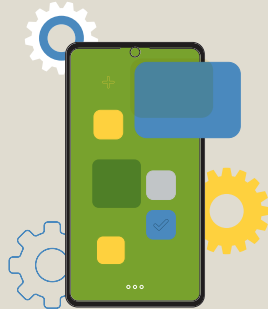
The FEVS is a yearly survey of government employees. WAPA uses the survey to inform decisions about organizational culture and meeting employee needs. Several key improvements have originated from survey findings, such as MaxiFlex, increased telework, the Listen-In segment of Senior Leadership Team meetings, the Leadership Development Program and more frequent All-Employee Meetings and town hall events.

“You – and all you do every day – make WAPA a Best Place to Work,” said Interim Administrator and CEO **Tracey LeBeau** in her announcement. “I am so proud to be part of this WAPA family. Thank you for serving like your lights depend on it.”



IT automates mobile app request process

Information Technology has announced a new automated process for requesting apps for Apple mobile devices. Employees can now submit requests via the "Request Mobile App" link in the IT Service Portal. You can find this catalog item by either typing its name in the search bar or navigating to it under Application Support.



This process applies only to users with Apple mobile devices that are enrolled in Intune under the Automated Device Enrollment. You can determine that you are enrolled in ADE if you no longer have access to the Apple store on your mobile device.

Users with Android devices are not affected.

Access the IT Service Portal by clicking on the Service Portal tile on the right-hand side of the myWAPA homepage.



Award deadlines on the horizon

All fiscal year 2021 awards must be paid out prior to September 30. This requires that the awards process adheres to the following deadlines.

- **SOAR Awards:** Nominations must be signed and submitted to each region's Human Resources Business Partner or to **Allison Burnett** by Aug. 13.
- **TOWER Awards:** Must be redeemed by Aug. 20.
- **Gold Star Awards:** Must be redeemed by Sept. 10. Employees will then have until Sept. 30 to complete the process in Money Network or the awards will be cancelled.



Awards received after the deadline will be held for processing until the FY 2022 awards budget is issued, typically in late November.

Contact burnett@wapa.gov or cgates@wapa.gov with any questions.



Join the security culture focus groups

The Office of Security and Emergency Management will host security culture focus groups in the near future.

These groups represent programs and departments throughout WAPA and will add clarity to security culture gaps identified in the recent security culture survey. The groups will also support the vetting of ideas and strategies for enhancing WAPA's security culture, playing a critical role in making the organization a more actively secure place to work.

All interested WAPA employees are encouraged to participate.

To sign up for the focus group, email pwatson@wapa.gov



WAPA announces RM regional manager

On July 28, WAPA announced that **Barton Barnhart** had been selected to serve as senior vice president and Rocky Mountain regional manager. He assumed the role Aug. 1.

Prior to joining WAPA, Barnhart was a deputy assistant secretary at the Department of Energy, where he provided executive leadership and directed the management and operation of America's Strategic Petroleum Reserve. He joined the DOE in 2015 as a member of the Senior Executive Service in the Office of Environmental Management.

Barnhart served in the U.S. Air Force, achieving the rank of colonel. He was the chief engineer of U.S. Air Forces Central Command and was responsible for Air Force engineer warfighting operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan. He holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the Missouri University of Science and Technology and a master's degree in military art and science from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

"Bart has known about WAPA since his days as a lieutenant at Lowry Air Force Base and is very excited to be part of a team he has always held in high esteem," said Interim Administrator and CEO **Tracey LeBeau** in her announcement. "Please join me in welcoming Bart to WAPA and Rocky Mountain. I would also like to sincerely thank **Jack Murray** and **Tim Vigil** for their leadership as Rocky Mountain's acting regional managers."

